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ABSTRACT

Educational administration is currently debating the future of the profession and the most appropriate modes for the preparation of school leaders, including the role of higher education in developing preparation models. This paper reviews selected master's and doctoral programs in educational administration and argues that preparation programs should critically examine their role in the continual development of administrators. It defines knowledge as the link between theory and practice, and development as the means through which formal and practical knowledge are bonded. Most programs reviewed failed to recognize development as crucial to individual success, but were intent upon developing a set of prescribed skills and knowledge that must be learned to obtain a degree. In conclusion, professors of educational administration must find ways to link learners to resources that fit their individual learning styles and development needs to fulfill their stages of professional evolution. (LMI)

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Professional Development in Educational Administration Programs: Where Does it Exist?

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Professional Development in Educational Administration Programs: Where Does it Exist?

Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.

--John F. Kennedy

Abstract

Educational administration is currently in the throes of a new debate concerning the future of the profession and the most appropriate modes for the preparation of school leaders, including the presence of higher education in such a model for preparation. Preparation programs should continue to critically examine their role in the continual development of administrators rather than a brief, fragmented, textbook, course framework. An example of continual development and possible models for implementation are presented.

Introduction

In 1992, a special report from the National Association of Secondary School Principals called for "all stakeholders to unite in a rational attack on the common problems associated with the identification, preparation, and development of school leaders" (p. 34). Since that call major efforts have resulted in the development of a knowledge and skill base for the preparation of school leaders (Thompson, 1993). Proponents of the 21 domains view this document as indeed a break-through in improving the quality of the preparation of school leaders. While others such as Sacken (1994) suggest that the development of these domains has codified;

> the all-too-familiar pyramidal structure of modern organizations wherein those at the top possess the most authority, knowledge, influence, discretion,

> valor, and wisdom. . . . Just lifting the book of standards is evidence supporting those who argue that principals need a doctorate before assuming office - no less lengthy period of study could possibly cover all these domains. (pp. 664-665)

Daresh (1988) offers that "from various sources . . . comes a clear and consistent call for university administrator preparation programs to stop teaching about administration and instead direct alternation toward helping people to learn how to administer schools" (p. 17).

Perhaps the fundamental questions of this issue and subsequent debate should be an examination the role of development in the acquisition of knowledge for leaders in educational administration: How development fits into the evolution of school leaders ? When should development be considered? What is the relationship between development and the acquisition of knowledge or learning? Where should this development take place? And why should we consider the development of leaders?

Until recently, the mission of education, higher education particularly, was to produce a "knowledgeable person." More appropriately, a person who when poured full of enough knowledge was able to respond with a intellectual response. The underlying assumption was that if educators fill people with enough knowledge, they will turn out good and will know how to use that knowledge. But, as the world around us has changed, so has the mission of education evolved. Higher education is now being asked to produce people who are competent in the application of knowledge as well.

The Dilemma

To answer the needs of competency, Twale and Short (1989) offer that the key is to develop a conceptual framework for diagnosis based on both theory and practice. Cognitive theorist argue that learning is more than knowledge building, rather learning does not take place in isolation, it is context oriented and therefor demands application. Ryle in The Concept of Mind suggests that the difference between knowing-that (factual knowledge) and knowing-how (skill knowledge). Knowing-that can be viewed as knowledge acquisition while knowing-what can be seen as skill acquisition.

Murphy and Hallinger (1986) refer to this dichotomy in preparation as "empowerment for change" and "accumulation of knowledge" (p. 16). They speculate that the acquisition of knowledge without the conceptual linkage to implementation leaves the administrator with knowledge [a bag of tricks] without a way to utilize the knowledge. Professors are often confronted by administrator practitioners or future administrators who are faced with the social, economic, and political pressure that is unequally distributed in today's schools. They have a tendency to make statements like: "That may be a great theory, but it will not work in my school" or, "I've heard all the theory I want, just give me a formula that will work." Such comments are personalistic generalizations of "theory-in-use" as described by Argyris and Schon (1974).

Fenstermacher (1994) suggests that two major types of knowledge exist, formal and practical. Formal knowledge is understood, in its purest form as "a form of justified belief" (p. 24). In education, this justified belief is softened to "an objectively reasonable belief" were the permanent qualities of a notion are gauged in relationship to the context in which the claim is made. However, "Ones claims [to knowledge] must be justified in such a manner that they range beyond the immediate context, situation, or slice of time" (p 28).

Practical knowledge has its roots in Greek form of *techne* , knowing how to make, a skill or capacity for the exercise of some craft. This knowledge is "bound by time, place, or situation. To claim to know something practically is to claim to know something about action, event, or situation in this particular instance."(Fenstermacher, 1994, p. 28) Caution in the exercise of practical knowledge is the justification of the practice used. Crossman (1959) studied the effects of practice and indicated that practice causes performance to improve. Further, Papert (1980) suggests that educational transference, the transfer of knowledge from one situation to another, increases performance.

VanLehn (1989) defines this dichotomy as the difference between declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge where declarative is defined as knowing and procedural as manipulating the knowledge. *Einstellung* refers to a familiarity bias where administrators make decisions based on a preconceived plan of action, rather than using best information available (Luchins, 1942). This is a classic example of declarative knowledge being used rather than procedural knowledge. Tulving (1972) classified this difference as sematic memory or the generic knowledge applicable to many situations and episodic memory which describes specific episodes in subject's history.

Whitehead (1931), one of the great philosophers of the 20th century, identified this dilemma and offered an early solution to this puzzle. In an obscure footnote, he pointed out that it was appropriate to define education as a process of transmittal of what is known (formal knowledge). This knowledge is relative to the time-span in which it was developed. Changes in knowledge are dependent on the time-span of major cultural changes as they relate to the life-span of individuals. Further, Whitehead emphasized that:

> We are living in the first period of human history for which the assumption that what is learned in youth will remain valid and useful for the rest of our

> lives [is no longer so] . . . today the time-span [of knowledge] is considerably shorter than that of human life, and accordingly our training must prepare individuals to face a novelty of conditions. (pp. viii-xix)

This time-span continues to shorten due to technological advancements and the immediate impact upon perceptions of other cultures. Thus, an on-going commitment to life-long development becomes of utmost importance.

Knowles (1980) expands this concept suggesting that

> under this new condition, knowledge gained at any point of time is largely obsolete within a matter of years; and skills that people produce in their twenties become out-of-date in their thirties. So it is no longer functional to define education as a process of transmitting what is known; it must now be defined as a lifelong process of continuing inquiry. And so the most important learning of is learning how to learn, the skills of self-directed learning. (p. 41)

Erlandson's (1994) study to determine the needs of principals at various points in their careers suggests that the principal must foster this learning skill. However, Erlandson found that even experienced principals, who kept logs during their careers reported that the log were not particularly valuable to help them on the job. They did not use them as a tool for reflection. Their lack of knowledge concerning use of a log may indicate a lack of knowledge on the reflective process, thus resulting in a lack of direction for professional development. Further,

> Principals at different points in their careers recognize distinct professional needs that can be demonstrably related to their current job requirements. This does not mean, however that a single set of needs for all principals can be identified at particular career stages. (Erlandson, 1994, p.23)

Simon and Kaplan, (1989) offer that "it has been shown for a number of years that a world class level of expertise is never attained with less than ten years of

concentrated learning and practice" (p. 41). This combined with the notion that new principals have different needs than experienced principals does not mean that a single set of knowledge and skills can be identified at particular career stages. Thus, a relationship between and among knowledge, learning and development appears to exist and should not be considered separately.

Modes of Development

Boyatzis and Kolb (cited in Erlandson, 1994) postulated three modes of development [defined as growth and adaptation] throughout one's career were learning occurs: the performance mode where one is concerned with mastery and success of skills; the learning mode where a person is seeking application of the skills to a variety of settings and stretching the use of those skill into future settings; and the development mode where the leader is striving to connect the skills, looking to develop a vision for the future, and seeking to determine the big picture. Key to this postulate is that the model is recursive by nature. Persons will move from one mode to another dependent upon the nature of the job, the setting of the job, and ability [knowledge] of the person.

Erlandson (1994) suggests that

> The requirements of any new position may require a successful experienced principal to return to an earlier developmental stage, though probably not to the 'survival' or 'control' stage suggesting that circumstances will effect an individual's needs. . . .The needs of principals in the developmental mode are likely to be quite compatible with the goals of the institutions and agencies with whom they are working. (pp. 26-31)

Vygostsky (1978) offers that "developmental processes do not always coincide with the learning process. Rather developmental processes lags behind the learning process" (p. 90). The point to be gleaned for this discussion is that one cannot opt for practical knowledge without formal knowledge or formal knowledge without

practical knowledge. They are independent and must be considered simultaneously. These two types of knowledge combine with learning and the developmental process used result in the eventual performance of the school leader. This performance is directly related to the job and must be considered in administrator development.

Programs in Educational Administration

A review of selected master and doctoral programs in educational administration programs reveal that little is discussed concerning the role development plays in the preparation of a successful leader, more specifically concerning the on-going improvement of the person. The term development is couched in terms relative to program sequence i.e. "to enable a systematic and developmental approach to the principal preparation," "professional sequence," "experience in the development of such leadership," "courses provide as well as field experiences provide for the development of skills and knowledge essential for the evaluation . . ." A closer review of these programs suggests that development is found in assessment elements. However, these descriptions tend to be programmatic in function rather than focusing on the individual. e.g. "Students develop profiles of strengths and areas of growth based on assessment results which are checked again as they reach the leadership seminar, practicum, and internship." "Assessments . . . are translated into a student profile . . . are used by the advisement triad not only to make admission decisions, but to personalize field experiences and to develop programs of study." "early assessment is used to develop a profile."

A review of the selected doctoral program in this study found no reference to development in light of the person's current formal knowledge and practical knowledge. Rather, an assessment and development component is used to determine the entry of "high flyers" into programs to insure success of the programs, not the individual. These programs continue to reflect Feldvebel's (1981) concern that programs need to move from labeling potential talent to developing talent.

Development appears to be part of the self-selective self-motivating process built in successful administrators. However, it appears that most programs consider development within the preparation program, yet fail to visualize how a program fits the needs of individuals within an ever changing profession. The programs appear to take a narrow view of how a program should reflect a group of professors' views of a successful school leader and fails to recognize the impact such programs have on the development of the profession in the person. To put this another way, programs tend to focus on a piece of the job, a piece of the setting, and a piece of the person. They fail to recognize that preparation programs represent a substantial portion of administrator development but are not all of a person's developmental needs.

Surely, national efforts such as the Danforth Project, the National Association of Secondary School Principal's Alliance project have had an impact upon programs. However, these efforts and many others have focused upon doctoral level programs and ignored programs which develop most school leaders. In addition, these program tend to serve people who have already developed attitudes, skills and knowledge of school administration.

Many programs have failed to recognize that development is key to the success of any individual. Rather, they are intent upon developing a set of prescribed criteria of skills and knowledge that must be learned to attain a degree. These degrees represent only a picture of the person's abilities at a particular time in their professional life. Degrees do not measure nor ensure on-going development of the administrator. Quality should be the driving force not quantity measured in the accomplishment of a degree made up of currently identified competencies and skills.

In fact, Maher (1988) found that school administrators were dissatisfied with their preparation programs because it tended to focus on reflection and theory and not problem solving skills. However, Maher stressed that educational theory should be taught in application including knowledge of how to understand people and

organizations. Anderson (1989) suggests that central to this problem is that while university preparation programs do present knowledge about school administration, they do not help aspiring administrators develop the necessary skills to transfer that knowledge to practice. For the most part, it is assumed that armed with theory, administrators will be able to make effective use of it to improve their leadership activities.

Meanwhile Lambert (1987) stated that a predetermined set of skills and curricula would not be effective. The fixed approach suffered from three weaknesses: 1.) it assess that the curricula is clearly established; 2.) that effectiveness is predicated on learning the curricula and: 3.) that all participants will learn effectively in the set curricular.

During a recent discussion concerning the NPBEA recommendations and the implications for preparation programs, Lane, Richardson, Smith, and Van Berkum (1994) urged colleagues to move beyond skill development and knowledge bases. Administration preparation programs need to determine where the learning takes place in an individual's development i.e. where the individual becomes the focus not the acquisition of skills and knowledge that may already be acquired or obsolete. The emphasis must be on knowledge and generic skill development, not particular problems of practice.

Could it be, in our eagerness to implement reform, we may be missing the point? Reform is not to create professional development schools that embrace specific knowledge and skills; rather it is to replace old attitudes and concepts with new ones.

Duffy (1994) suggests

> one way to understand this problem is to examine the way in which professional development schools are typically identified. In many places around the country, professional development schools are first identified by

> top-echelon university personnel in conference with top-echelon school personnel. Then a meeting is held with a broader range of school and university personnel and, perhaps, a representative of the teachers . . . This top-down management model seems particularly appropriate because of pressure to move quickly so that professional development schools can be up and running before interest wanes, funding falters, and the impetus is lost. (p. 596)

Lane, et al (1994) "urged colleagues to consider the implications of continuing an educative process that relies on skill development" (p. 23). A developmental approach suggests that we take educational leaders from where they are and move them into future needs. Vision becomes a standard rather than the exception. Formal knowledge, practical knowledge, skills, and competencies become a means of development, not an end within themselves.

> Being preoccupied with the creation of professional development schools inadvertently put both professors and teachers in difficult positions. . . . Teachers are put in a back seat because they are once again cast in the role of students. . . . Under such circumstances, professions must become gurus, and teachers must feel disempowered. As long as this relationship exists, only cosmetic change will result. (Duffy, 1994, p. 600)

Meadows (1986) specifies that principals must "commit themselves to continuous learning and improvement" (p. 59). He further states that principals must view continuous improvement as a way of life. Lane, Richardson, Smith and Van Berkum (1994) suggest that "what we should be providing aspiring administrator is knowledge concerning learning and helping them to develop a learning attitude" (p. 7). For example, Erlandson (1994) offers that

> there is a need to develop all school leaders at increasingly sophisticated levels. Development opportunities should be made available to principals throughout their careers. . . and a variety of developmental opportunities should be offered at increasingly sophisticated level beginning in the preparation program and lasting throughout the principal's career. (p. 27)

Where will these opportunities come from? A united effort must be made by universities, professional associations, school districts, state departments of education, and other agencies to provide appropriate developmental activities that recognize individual differences of school leaders, while ensuring the needs of the school these people serve. Therefore, individual development of formal and practical knowledge in educational administration programs must be considered. Students in these programs should revise their objectives repeatedly. Program objectives must be revised as well. However, these revisions will be difficult to do with predetermined terminal behavioral objectives, not to mention the relationship of time and social changes.

Professors need to reconsider the current organization of educational administration programs. We must find a way to link learners to resources that fit their individual learning styles and development needs to fulfill their stages of professional evolution. If theories-in-use remain at the unconscious level and remain inconsistent and tacit, they will be unsuitable learning tools until the practice makes connection or linkage between their actions and their reasons for behavior. When left unconnected these tacit assumptions lead to a difference in perception between training and learning (Silver, 1983).

Finally, Knowles (1980) and Tough (1967) suggest caution for all as we look to develop human school leaders. Tough's (1967) research findings regarding how adults learn naturally is that very often they will enter into a learning project with a

rather vague objective and as they become better informed about the content of their inquiry their objective becomes sharper and clearly focused.

Conclusion

The purpose of this discussion was to determine where development exists in educational administration programs. Development in itself is an attitude that must be acquired. Critical to this discussion is the definition of knowledge that links the theoretical perspective and to the practical perspective. If the transference of formal and practical knowledge to specific situations to increase performance, the development must be considered as the process to bond these concepts and promote increased learning resulting in increase knowledge.

In our attempts to establish guiding principals for education administration programs, we as a group of professor will encounter the temptation to use power and certainty to control the learning of others. The 21 domains determined by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration and suggestion of use may become that certainty. When teaching does not adequately account for the domains, we could fall prey to the temptation of certainty in teaching. Curricula would be set and instruction would center on performance of a set of domains that reflect control on valued certainties in education. Poor performance would impose corrections on the uncertainties that have developed. Thus, students fall victim to the temptation of power within the classroom. Development of the professional and the profession would not occur.

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